

Monroe County Department of Health

West Nile Virus Fact Sheet

Personal Protection

- Who's most at risk of serious illness from WNV?
 - People at highest risk from WNV include persons over age 50 and people with weakened immune systems. The average age of people made seriously ill from WNV in New York was 61 in 2000. Children and healthy adults are not considered to be at higher-risk, but should still be cautious
- Mosquitoes are most active between dusk and dawn; minimize outdoor activity during these times if possible
- Wear long-sleeved shirts and pants if outside during hours when mosquitoes are at their peak
- Consider use of an insect repellent containing DEET; be careful to follow all instructions
 - Apply repellent outdoors
 - Do not allow young children to apply the product themselves
 - Wash thoroughly with soap and water after returning indoors for the evening

Drain standing water on your property

- Mosquitoes can breed in containers as small as a bottle cap
- Dispose of tires, tin cans, plastic containers and anything else not needed that collects water
- Drain children's pools when not in use
- Drain pool covers
- Fill in low areas on your property that hold water for more than a few days

Report ONLY dead crows to the MCHD at 234-9600 (an automated number available 24/7)

- It is not necessary to report bird species other than crows at this time. Crows have the highest mortality from WNV and will serve as the best marker that the illness has re-emerged in our area. Because it is assumed that the virus will return this year, the New York State Health Department does not believe it is necessary to test all dead crows. Only a small number, several per week, will be submitted for testing this year.

Testing

- Bird - reported dead crows will be plotted on a map to ascertain the density of bird deaths in a particular geographic area. These data will be used to evaluate the potential for human disease
- Mosquito - to gauge the distribution and abundance of mosquitoes, environmental staff will increase efforts over last year to routinely collect samples of both live mosquitoes and larvae from multiple locations within Monroe County.
- Human - communicable disease control staff will work closely with the medical community to ensure rapid laboratory diagnosis of all suspect cases of human WNV to promptly detect an outbreak.

Mosquito Larvicide

- Health officials will utilize GIS mapping to identify areas in Monroe County with the highest concentrations of older residents and selectively larvicide catch basins to reduce mosquito populations. Given the mobility and range of birds, once the virus is detected in Monroe County, it should be assumed to be present county-wide. The large number of areas of standing water and otherwise traditionally wet areas will preclude the ability to apply larvicide to all such areas. Municipalities have committed to reduce standing water where possible.

Mosquito Adulticide (Spraying)

- Adulticides (spraying) will be considered only if the risk of human disease is high; for example if a cluster of human cases occurs in a particular area.

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